

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Springfield, Ohio

November 2, 2012

The President. Hello, Ohio! Thank you! How's it going, Wildcats? There really are some wildcats in here. You're fired up! Are you fired up? Are you fired up? Fired up?

Can everybody please give Alicia a big round of applause for the great introduction? It is great to see all of you! For the past few days——

Audience member. I love you!

The President. I love you back. I do. [Applause] I do.

For the past few days, all of us have been focused on one of the worst storms in our lifetime. And everybody in Ohio obviously has been watching the images on TV. We are so saddened by those who lost their lives. We can only imagine what their families are going through, and our thoughts and prayers are with them.

I had a call this morning with my emergency teams, and one of the things that I've emphasized to everybody on the East Coast: People all around the country want to send a message, and that is, we will stand with folks in New York and New Jersey and Connecticut every step of the way until they have fully recovered. That's a commitment we're making to them.

When I make those commitments, I don't make those commitments just as President. I make those commitments on behalf of the American people. And what's interesting is, during these kinds of crises, these disasters, as tough as it is and as sad as it is, we're also inspired, because we see heroes running into buildings and wading through water to save their fellow citizens. We see neighbors helping neighbors cope with tragedy. We see leaders of different political parties working to fix what's broken, not to score political points. We see a spirit that says no matter how bad a storm is, no matter how tough times are, we're going to make it because we're all in this together. We rise or fall as one Nation and as one people.

And that spirit, Ohio, has guided this country along its improbable journey for more than two centuries. And it's also guided us and carried us through the trials and tribulations of the last 4 years.

In 2008, we were in the middle of two wars and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Today, our businesses have created nearly 5½ million new jobs, and this morning we learned that companies hired more workers in October than at any time in the last 8 months.

The American auto industry is back on top. Home values, housing starts are on the rise. We're less dependent on foreign oil than any time in the last 20 years. Because of the service and sacrifice of our brave men and women in uniform, the war in Iraq is over, the war in Afghanistan is ending, Al Qaida has been decimated, Usama bin Laden is dead.

So we're on the move, Ohio. We've made real progress these past 4 years. But the reason all of you are here today—the reason I'm here today—is because we know we've got more work to do. As long as there's a single American who wants a job, but can't find one, our work is not done. As long as there are families working harder, but falling behind, as long as there's a

child anywhere in this country who is languishing in poverty, barred from opportunity, our fight goes on. We are not finished yet. We've got more work to do.

We're here because we understand this Nation cannot succeed without a growing, thriving middle class, without sturdy ladders for folks who are willing hard to get into the middle class. Our fight goes on because America has always done best when everybody is getting a fair shot and everybody is doing their fair share and everybody plays by the same rules. That's what we believe. That's what you believe. That's why you elected me in 2008. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, in 4 days, Springfield, 4 days—just 4—4 days for 4 years. In 4 days, you've got a choice to make. It's not just a choice between two parties or two candidates, it's a choice between two different visions for America. It's a choice between going back to the top-down policies that got us into this mess or the middle-out, bottom-up strategies that have gotten us out of this mess and are going to keep us going.

As Americans, we believe in free enterprise, and we believe in the strivers and the dreamers and the risk takers who are the driving force behind our economy. That's how we create growth and prosperity, the greatest the world has ever known. But we also believe that our economy does better, our businesses do better, our entrepreneurs do better, when everybody has got a chance to succeed, when all our children are getting a decent education, when all our workers are learning new skills, when we support research in medical breakthroughs and new technologies.

We believe America is stronger when everybody can count on affordable health insurance and Medicare and Social Security, when our kids are protected from toxic dumping and pollution, when our consumers aren't being taken advantage of by credit card companies or mortgage lenders.

We believe in a democracy where everybody's voice is heard, where you just can't buy an election. And we believe in politicians who understand that there's some things the American people can do better for themselves, for example, that politicians in Washington—mostly men—shouldn't be controlling health care choices that women can make perfectly well for themselves.

For 8 years, we had a President who shared these beliefs—a guy named Bill Clinton. And so our beliefs were put to the test. His economic plan asked the wealthiest Americans to pay a little bit more so we could continue to invest in our people, continue to invest in ideas and innovation, invest in our infrastructure. And at the time, the Republican Congress and a Senate candidate by the name of Mitt Romney—

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, no, no, don't boo, vote. *[Applause]* Vote! Voting is the best revenge.

But at the time, Mitt Romney said Bill Clinton's plan would hurt the economy and kill jobs. It turns out, his math back then was just as bad as it is today. Because by the end of President Clinton's second term, America had created 23 million new jobs and incomes were up and poverty was down and our deficit became the biggest surplus in history. So our ideas were tried and tested, and they worked. Their ideas were also tried, and they didn't work out so well.

Because remember, in the 8 years after Bill Clinton left office, they tried this top-down economics, they tried this you're-on-your-own economics. We tried giving big tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans. We tried giving insurance companies and oil companies and big Wall Street banks a free license to do whatever they pleased. We tried it. And what did we get? We got falling incomes, record deficits, the slowest job growth in half a century, and we ended up with an economic crisis that we've been cleaning up after ever since.

So we tried our ideas; they worked. We tried their ideas—didn't work. Now, Governor Romney, he's a very gifted salesman. So he's been trying in this campaign, as hard as he can, to repackage these ideas that didn't work—the very same policies that did not work—and he's trying to pretend that they're change. Have you heard him? He's going around saying, I'm the candidate of change. Except when you look at the policies, they're the same ones that didn't work.

Now, the thing is, we know what change looks like, and what he's selling ain't it. Giving more power to the biggest banks, that's not change. Another \$5 trillion tax cut that favors the wealthy is not change. Refusing to answer questions about the details of your policies until after the election, not change.

Ruling out compromise, pledging to rubberstamp the Tea Party agenda in Congress, that's not change. That's exactly what we need to change. Kind of massaging the facts when they're inconvenient to your campaign, that's definitely not change. That's the oldest trick in the book.

That's what Governor Romney has been doing these last few weeks. You've been seeing it. Right here in Ohio, folks who work at the Jeep plant have been having to call up their employers because they're worried; they're asking if their jobs are being shipped to China. And the reason they're worried is because they saw ads run by Governor Romney saying Jeep plants were going to be shipping jobs to China. Of course, it turns out, it's not true. The car companies themselves have told Governor Romney to knock it off. *[Applause]* Knock it off. That's what they said.

GM—General Motors said, we think creating jobs in the United States should be a source of bipartisan pride. That's what they said, and they're right. I couldn't agree more.

And I understand Governor Romney has a tough time here in Ohio because he was against saving the auto industry. And the auto industry accounts for one out of eight jobs here in Ohio. So I get that it's a problem for him. But you can't run away—4 days, 5 days, 6 days before an election—run away from that position, especially when you're on videotape saying the words, "Let Detroit go bankrupt." You said it.

And you can't try to scare people. Listen, this is not a game. These are people's jobs. These are people's lives. The auto industry, they spend a lot of money advertising and branding and letting folks know that we're back and we're here in America and we're making American cars with American workers. And now, suddenly, you've got a guy going out there saying something that's not true? You don't scare hardworking Americans just to scare up some votes. That's not what being President is about.

When I first made the decision to rescue the auto industry, some of you don't remember this, but it was not very popular. Even in Ohio and Michigan, it wasn't popular, but I knew it was the right thing to do. Betting on American workers was the right thing to do. Betting on American ingenuity and know-how and manufacturing, that was the right thing to do. And that bet paid off, and it paid off in Lordstown, and it paid off in Toledo. They're creating new jobs

right now, not in China: right here in Ohio, right here in the United States of America. It was the right thing to do.

And so, as you think about the choice over these next 4 days, and when you're talking to your friends and your neighbors and your colleagues, one of the things that's important about electing a President is trust—trust. Is somebody going to say what they mean and mean what they say?

After 4 years as President, you know me. You may not agree with every decision I've made. Sometimes you may have been frustrated at the pace of change. But you know what I believe. You know where I stand. You know I tell the truth. You know I'll fight for you and your families every single day as hard as I know how. That's why I'm running for a second term, because I want to fight for you. That's why I need your votes, Springfield. That's why I need your vote, Ohio.

And I know what real change looks like, because I fought for it, right alongside you. And after all we've been through together, we sure can't give up now.

Let me tell you about the change we need over the next 4 years: real change. Real change is a country where every American has a shot at a great education. This school that we're in is an example of a school that's making incredible reforms. The Race to the Top program that we put together, this is one of the winners of Race to the Top, right—this school right here.

So we know how to raise standards and recruit great teachers and become more creative in the classroom. And our kids are going to succeed. But you can't tell me that more teachers won't help grow our economy. Don't tell me that students who can't afford to college—to go to college should just borrow more money from their parents. That wasn't an option for me; probably wasn't an option for a lot of you.

That's why I want to cut the growth of tuition in half over the next 10 years. That's why I want to recruit 100,000 math and science teachers so our kids don't fall behind the rest of the world. That's why I want to train 2 million Americans at our community colleges with the skills that businesses are looking for right now. That's what change is. That's my plan for the future. That's the America we're fighting for in this election. Forward.

Change comes when we live up to this country's legacy of innovation. The nice thing about the auto industry, we're not just building cars again, we're building better cars again, more advanced cars, better technology, cars that by the middle of the next decade will go twice as far on a gallon of gas. Today, there are workers who are building long-lasting batteries and wind turbines all across the country and right here in Ohio. These are jobs that didn't exist 4 years ago.

And I don't want a Tax Code that subsidizes oil company profits when oil companies are already making a lot of money, I want to support the clean energy jobs of tomorrow. I want to support the new technology that is going to cut our oil imports in half by 2020. I don't want a Tax Code that rewards companies that are shipping jobs overseas, I want to reward companies that are taking root right here in Springfield, Ohio; right here—[applause]—right here in Lordstown, in Toledo, in Youngstown.

I am confident about a renaissance, a resurgence of American manufacturing. And that's good for the entire economy. That's the future I see for this country, making stuff again, selling it all around the world, products stamped with three proud words: Made in America.

Change—real change—is turning the page on a decade of war so we can do some nation-building here at home. As long as I'm Commander in Chief, we'll pursue our enemies with the strongest military the world's ever known. But it's time we used some of the savings from ending the war to pay down our debt, rebuild America, put folks back to work right now repairing roads and bridges, schools all across this country.

And let's put our veterans back to work, because anybody who's served us, protected us, fought for our freedom should not have to fight for a job when they come home. That should be our priority. That's my plan to keep us strong. That's my commitment to them. That's what's at stake in this election.

You want to talk about real change? Let's talk about how we reduce our deficit in a balanced and responsible way. I signed a trillion dollars' worth of spending cuts; I'm ready to do more. I will work with Democrats and Republicans. But if we're serious about reducing the deficit, we've also got to ask folks like me, the wealthiest Americans in the country, to go back to paying taxes at the same rate when Bill Clinton was in office.

Millionaires and billionaires, they're not going to be going to the poorhouse because they paid a slightly higher tax rate. They'll be fine. And if we're going to be serious about reducing the deficit you've got to make choices. You can't just reduce the deficit on the backs of the middle class, on the backs of the poor.

As long as I'm President, I'm not going to turn Medicare into a voucher just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to make it more expensive for young people to go to college just to pay for another millionaire's tax cut. I'm not going to eliminate investments in research and science that are the key to our future just to pay for a millionaire's tax cut. That's not who we are. Those aren't the right priorities. That's not real change.

We know what real change is. We know what the future requires, and we also know it's not going to be easy. I talked about this in 2008; some people forgot. But in 2008, I said back then, when I talk about change that we can believe in, I'm not just talking about changing Presidents or changing parties, I'm talking about changing our politics.

I ran the last time and I'm running this time, because the voices of the American people—your voices—had been shut out of our democracy for way too long: by lobbyists and special interests and politicians who will do whatever it takes to just keep things the way they are—the protectors of the status quo. And over the last 4 years, the status quo in Washington, they fought us every step of the way on everything we wanted to do. They spent millions of dollars trying to stop us from reforming health care, millions of dollars trying to stop us from reforming Wall Street. They engineered a strategy of gridlock in Washington, refusing to compromise on anything, even on ideas that both Democrats and Republicans had supported in the past.

And what they're counting on now is that you're going to be so fed up, so worn down with all the squabbling in Washington, so tired of all the dysfunction, that you'll just give up, just walk away, and leave them to make the decisions. They're betting on cynicism. Ohio, I'm betting on you. I'm betting on you. I'm betting on the decency and good sense of the American people, the folks I meet all across Ohio and all across this country.

And that doesn't mean that this is just a Democratic thing. When the other party has been with me to help middle class families, I loved working with them. We cut taxes for middle class families and small businesses; some of them cooperated. When we came together to repeal "don't ask, don't tell," there were some courageous Republican Senators who stood up. I

appreciate that. I will work with anybody of any party to move this country forward. And if you really want to break the gridlock in Congress, then you'd better vote for leaders who feel the same way, whether they are Democrats or Republicans or Independents. You'd better work for folks who are putting people first, not the next election first.

But I want everybody to be clear: There are still going to be some struggles and some fights. Look, I'm a very nice guy, people will tell you. [*Laughter*] I really am. But if the price of peace in Washington is cutting deals that kicks students off of financial aid or getting rid of funding for Planned Parenthood or let insurance companies discriminate against people with preexisting conditions or eliminate health care for millions of folks on Medicaid who are elderly or disabled or poor, I'm not going to make that deal. I'll fight against that deal. That's a price I'm not willing to pay. That's not bipartisanship. That's not change. That's surrender to a status quo that has hurt too many American families. And I'm not going along with it. [*Applause*] I'm not going along with it.

I am a long ways away from giving up on this fight. I got a lot of fight left in me.

Audience member. You're not too tired?

The President. I don't get tired. I don't grow weary. I hope you aren't tired either, Ohio.

Audience members. No!

The President. I hope you aren't tired either.

The folks at the very top in this country, they don't need another champion in Washington. They've got lobbyists. They've got PACs. They've always got a seat at the table. They'll always have access. They'll always have influence in Congress. The people who need a champion are the Americans whose letters I read every night, the men and women I meet on the campaign trail every day. The laid-off furniture worker who decides to go back to a community college and retrain at the age of 55, she needs a champion. The restaurant owner who needs a loan to expand after the bank turned him down, he needs a champion. The cooks and the waiters and the cleaning staff working overtime in some Vegas hotel, trying to save enough to buy a first home or send their kids to college, they need a champion.

The autoworker who was laid off and never thought he'd go back to the line again and then suddenly was called back in and is now building a great car, filling him with pride and dignity, he needs a champion.

All those kids in inner cities and small farm towns and the rolling Virginia hills or the valleys of Ohio, right here in Springfield—kids dreaming of becoming doctors and scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs and diplomats and maybe even a President—they need a champion in Washington. Because they're our future. And the future will never have as many lobbyists as the status quo, but those children are our saving grace. That's what we're fighting for.

That's what we're fighting for. And that's why I need you, Ohio: to make sure their voices are heard, to make sure your voices are heard. We've come too far to turn back now. We've come too far to grow fainthearted. Now is the time to keep pushing. Now is the time to keep pushing forward: to educate all our kids and train all our workers and to create new jobs and rebuild our infrastructure, discover new sources of energy, broaden opportunity, grow our middle class, restore our democracy, and make sure that no matter what you look like or where you come from or how you started out, you can make it in America if you try. That's what we're fighting for. That's why I need your vote.

And if you're willing to work with me and knock on some doors with me and make some phone calls with me and turn out with me, we'll win Ohio. We'll win this election. We'll renew those bonds that tie us together as a people. We'll reaffirm that spirit that makes the United States of America the greatest nation on Earth.

God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at the Springfield High School Athletic Complex. In his remarks, he referred to Springfield, OH, resident Alicia Mitchell; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Springfield, OH.

Locations: Springfield, OH.

Names: Clinton, William J.; Mitchell, Alicia; Romney, W. Mitt.

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